

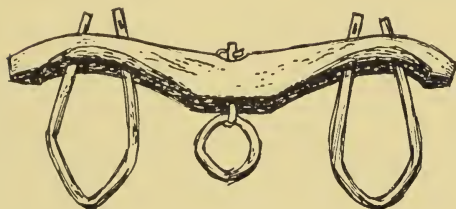
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Hesseltine, William B.

Abraham Lincoln: architect of the
nation

LINCOLN ROOM



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

architect of the nation

by

William B. Hesseltine

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Lincoln Room

FORWORD

The sesquicentennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln has been marked with numerous new studies of the Civil War president.

Dr. William B. Hesseltine, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, discussed Lincoln's theory and practice of government in an address before the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society on February 7, 1959. The following publication records his remarks on the occasion of the Annual Dinner Meeting of the Society at the Fort Wayne Womans Club.

The Society gratefully acknowledges the author's permission to publish his address and presents it as an interesting contribution to Lincolniana.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN: ARCHITECT OF THE NATION

It is common knowledge that the American Civil War resulted in the establishment of a centralized national authority in the United States, and that the doctrine of States Rights, long adhered to by the opponents of centralization was given its deathblow on the field of battle. In common parlance, the Southern Confederacy represented particularism, while the Federal cause symbolized the principles of the Union and centralization.

But although, this formulation might be satisfactory in common parlance and in general terms, it has two basic defects. In the first place, it fails to recognize that history is not the record of the clash of great forces and movements, but it is, instead, the record of the acts of men. States Rights and Centralization are generalizations rather than acting forces. It is human beings who move, and act, and clash, and their movements, their acts, and their clashes constitute history. Translated into human terms, States Rights meant those legal principles which brought fame and fortune to some men, while the opposing principle of Nationalism embodied the hopes, dreams, and profits of their rivals. The story of States Rights versus Nationalism can only be understood in terms of the human personalities and interests which were involved on each side.

The second defect in the generalization that the South represented States Rights while the North stood for National centralization is the unwarranted assumption that there was a unity in behalf of a principle on each side of the conflict. In reality, no such unity existed in either the Southern Confederacy or in the United States. In the South, Jefferson Davis was a Southern nationalist, favoring a strong and centralized government for the Confederacy. He talked the language of States Rights, but he fought the principle each time it raised its head in the Land of Dixie. At the same time, there was no unity in the North in favor of National centralization. Each of the Northern states, at some time or another, had asserted the doctrine of States Rights when it had felt the oppressive hand of the federal government. Throughout the North, Democrats and Republicans alike professed devotion to the Rights of the states. The Republican platform of 1860 upon which Lincoln ran for president, declared in unmistakable language that "The RIGHTS of the States...must and shall be preserved.... The maintenance inviolate of the Rights of the States is

essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depends." Yet, despite the platform and the pledge which it made, Abraham Lincoln battled with the forces of States Rights. The difference between Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis was not to be found in opposing attitudes on state powers, but in the different degrees of success which they had in their struggle for Nationalism. Davis lost the struggle in the South, while Abraham Lincoln won it in the North.

The battle that Lincoln won against States Rights was not fought solely on the battlefields of the Civil War; it was fought as well in the politics of the North. It was not fought solely against the Confederates; it was fought as well against the governors of the Northern states. The story of Abraham Lincoln against the state governors is the story of how Abraham Lincoln built a New Nation on the ruins of the old Federal Union.

Biographers' Interpretations of Lincoln

In the long years since his death, biographers of Lincoln have given various interpretations of his personality and of his character. Some have followed the lead of some of Lincoln's contemporaries and portrayed him as a "man of sorrows", a great humanitarian, a noble martyr to the great cause of human freedom. Other biographers, following other of Lincoln's contemporaries, have pictured him as an uncouth clown, a cracker-barrel humorist, a teller of stories which would disgrace a barroom. There were Democrats in his day who likened him to a baboon and pretended to be shocked by his vulgarity. There were members of Lincoln's own party who could not understand him--who could never have understood a man who could preface a serious discussion of a pressing problem by reading a chapter of the humorous writings of Artemus Ward. There was, for example, Charles Sumner, a senator who had been refined rather than educated by Harvard College and by long years of association among the elite of Boston, who could never understand a man who illustrated his penetrating observations on human conduct with yarns from the folklore of the hinterland. But what the biographers and most of his contemporaries never understood, was Lincoln's capacity for growth. Bemused by the aura of greatness which surrounds him and bedazzled by Lincoln as the symbol of the nation which he made, they have dealt with him as a

superhuman figure--a god raised up from the prairie--and as a figure who was as large in Springfield as he was in that last tragic hour in Ford's Theatre. They have failed to see that Lincoln grew in stature, grew in his understanding of his tasks, learned from experience, and matured in mind under the strict tutelage of events.

Lincoln Grew with the Nation

Perhaps no place was Lincoln's growth better illustrated than in his evolving concept of the Nation. Between the dates of his two inaugurals, a tremendous change took place in his understanding of his problems. Unconsciously, the transformation was revealed in his vocabulary. In his first inaugural address, he dealt at length with the nature of the federal union. Twenty times in this address he referred to the "federal union." It was, he said, "perpetual," It was older than the Constitution. It would endure forever. It was more perfect. Repeatedly he used the Union as the synonym for the country, and he closed with the prayer that the Chorus of Union would yet swell throughout the land. Not once in his first inaugural did he mention that the United States was a nation. A few months later, in his first message to Congress, Lincoln again explained the federal position against secession, and again he spoke in terms of the Union. A little over a year later, in August 1862, replying to Horace Greeley's Prayer of Twenty Millions he made his finest statement of his program. "I would save the Union," he repeated, over and over again he used the phrase "save the Union." But he also declared that his mind was not crystallized: "I shall adopt new views so fast as they appear to be true views."

It was fifteen months later, at the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery, that Lincoln showed that he had adopted new views. "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation," he announced. It was a far cry from what he had said only two score and seven months before at his inauguration. There he had talked of the American Revolution, of the Constitution, of the Union that had been formed, and matured, and made more perfect. Now, at Gettysburg, he was convinced that a new nation had been brought forth, and he was highly resolved that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.

Still later, in his second inaugural, Lincoln gave unconscious

evidence that the Nation had supplanted the Union in his thinking. Four times he referred to the Union in this address--and each time it was in reference to the situation in 1861. Four times he referred to the Nation--and each time it was in reference to the present or to the future. Now it was the energies of the Nation which were engrossed in the war, and it was a Nation which was to survive. It was national wounds which were to be healed. And it was here that Lincoln committed this new nation to do all that may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Fundamentally, Lincoln's great achievement was the creation of a new nation to take the place of the old federal union. When the smoke from the battlefields had cleared away, and regimental battle flags were stored away in museum cases, it began to dawn upon men that a great constitutional change had taken place. A revolution had occurred in the minds of men, and Abraham Lincoln, martyred for the case, stood as a symbol of the new nation. It was, in fact, Lincoln himself and not the Continental Congress or the Founding Fathers who brought forth and dedicated the new nation. In the process he scotched forever the doctrine of secession, defeated the Southern armies, and ended slavery in its greatest stronghold. But the victory over the South was not the only item in the creation of the nation. Equally as vital as the victory over the Confederate forces was the victory which Abraham Lincoln won over the doctrine of States Rights in the North.

Lincoln and the Civil War

Ever since the day when the Southern Vice-president, Alexander H. Stephens, wrote his version of the Civil War--A CONSTITUTIONAL VIEW OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES--ardent Southerners have been insisting that the proper name for the great conflict was The War Between the States. But this definition is defective on two counts. In the first place it gives the impression that states fought against states, that Michigan waged war on Mississippi, and Indiana and Georgia were locked in mortal combat. And, in the second place, it ignores the fact that States Rights and state particularism were dogmas held in the North as well as in the South. It was not, in truth, the states which were at war with one another. It was, instead, a war in which the national power beat down and destroyed the power of the states. It was a war for American nationalization, and considering the

problems which Lincoln faced and handled, it was A War Against the States.

In the process of making the nation, Lincoln dealt with many problems beyond those presented by armed rebellion. On the political front, he needed to win control over his political party and to make the party into an instrument of national service. It was a problem which involved the patronage (the distribution of offices, positions, and contracts) in such a manner that varied interests and talents could be brought to support the nation. It involved policy formation as well, the insistence that the energies of the nation should be directed toward national goals. In military matters, making a nation involved raising the armies and bringing them under national control. In its constitutional aspect, Lincoln's task involved strengthening the power of the national government against the ancient rights and prerogatives of the one-time sovereign states.

Lincoln and the Governors

In all these matters, Lincoln faced the competition, and even sometimes the actual enemy, of the governors of the states. The governors occupied strategic positions in both military and political affairs. States Rights was entwined into the whole warp of American life, into the organization of the militia system, into the economic structure, and into the basic practices of American political parties. The governors were the key figures in the states; they were the commanders-in-chief of the militia upon which Lincoln would have to depend. In the beginning, they could have blocked the raising of armies. The governors of Kentucky, North Carolina, Missouri, and Arkansas did refuse to furnish troops and there was no way that Lincoln and the federal government could coerce them into sending men to the armies. But even with the majority who co-operated, Lincoln and the War Department were in constant conflict over problems of mustering, payments, equipment, periods of enlistment, the care of the sick and wounded, the whole organization and administration of the Union armies. Moreover, the governors were the heads of the dominant political parties in the states.

In the beginning, the Republican party had no national unity. It was a conglomerate of discontents, a composite of state parties united only by a common enemy. State considerations nominated

Lincoln. It was the fear that Indiana's Henry S. Lane, Pennsylvania's Andrew Curtin, and Illinois' Richard Yates would be hampered in their gubernatorial campaigns if William H. Seward were the nominee that cleared the way for Lincoln's selection in the Chicago Wigwam. It was state elections that elected Lincoln. In state after state the candidates for governor ran ahead of the presidential candidate, and it was their combined votes that carried Lincoln into the White House. Small wonder it was that the governors, chief executives of the states and heads of successful parties, should have felt free to instruct and direct the prairie politician whom they had combined to elevate to a station beyond his deserts.

It was, however, a situation that played into Lincoln's hands. There was confusion of counsel, and Lincoln might choose which direction he might go. The Republican party, which had no national unity, had also no coherent body of principles. Within its ranks were old Free-Soil Abolitionists, anti-Nebraska Democrats, old line and conservative Whigs, Middle-western farmers, Pennsylvania iron mongers, old Know-Nothings, and a sprinkling of "forty-eighter" Germans. The party stood, in various parts of the country for various things. It was for States Rights, a protective tariff, a railroad to the Pacific, a homestead act, and aid to agricultural education. It was against slavery in the territories, against James Buchanan, against Stephen A. Douglas, and it was against the Democrats. Out of the whole, Lincoln might pick the parts which pleased him.

Lincoln's first task was to give his party a purpose. Founded on opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories, the party had practically outlived the issue upon achieving office--the Southern slave states had seceded and for all practical purposes abandoned their interest in the territories. In the weeks before his inauguration Lincoln heard confused counsel from his would-be advisors.

Early in January, 1861, Republican Austin Blair was inaugurated governor of Michigan. He faced a serious problem at home. He had been elected, but the outgoing Republican administration of the state was under a cloud. The state treasurer, fugitive from a grand jury, had absconded with the treasury. Blair quickly turned his attention to national affairs, and proceeded to give Lincoln advice on his coming administration. He wanted a firm stand against secession. "Oh," he cried, turning his face to the South and raising his voice as if he would be heard in Springfield, "for the firm, steady hand of a Washington,

or a Jackson to guide the ship of state in this perilous storm! Let us hope that we shall find him on the Fourth of March."

In Massachusetts, another governor, John A. Andrew cried for war upon the South. "War was in the air," he said, "and some of us breathed it." He armed his militia, offered it to the government, and eagerly awaited the day when Lincoln would declare war.

By the time Lincoln left Springfield for Washington, most of the governors had spoken, and most of them were demanding war. Democrats charged at the time, and historians have given serious consideration to the charge, that the president-elect rejected compromise, and soon after his inauguration maneuvered the Confederates into firing on Fort Sumter in order to preserve the Republican party. Whatever the merits of that controversy, the war served to furnish the necessary unity to the party, and Lincoln was able, for the moment, to direct its energies into saving the Union. It was, in truth, but a sample of Lincoln's acts. The governors might demand, might define policies--but it was Lincoln who had to implement them, and it was Lincoln who took the responsibility. Thereafter, he faced the task of forcing the governors to comply with the policy which he defined. So well did he perform the task that by the end of the war he had made himself master of his party, and had made the nation master of the states.

Altogether, during the Civil War, Lincoln had to deal with sixty-three governors. Some of them, like the governors of North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas soon became problems for Jefferson Davis. Some, like the governors of Kansas, or those on the Pacific coast, were too insignificant or far away to be of importance. Five were elected in 1864 and held office only for the last three and a half months of Lincoln's life. But forty-seven were important, providing problems to test the president's ingenuity, patience, and determination. Four states had only one governor during the war--Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Indiana--while Wisconsin and Missouri had four each. Three of the forty-seven died in office, eight resigned. Their average age on taking office was forty-six. The oldest was William Burton of Delaware, the youngest William Sprague of Rhode Island.

With both the seventy-two year old Burton and the thirty year old Sprague, Lincoln had problems which illustrated the problems of States Rights in an elementary form. When Lincoln called for militia, Burton calmly told him that Delaware had no militia and no militia

law. He would not object to Delawarians going off to defend the Union, but he was unable to give any aid. The federal government raised troops in Delaware. William Sprague, on the other hand, not only furnished troops but he led them himself. A spoiled youth who had inherited money at an early age, Sprague had amused himself by furnishing uniforms for the Marine Artillery Company of Providence, and as soon as Lincoln called for militia men, Sprague led his gaily uniformed but unarmed forces to the nation's defense. He and his soldiers promptly became a social sensation in Washington, and Sprague won the heart of Kate Chase, daughter of the Secretary of the Treasury. He did not, however, impress young John Hay, Lincoln's secretary, Hay was an active rival for the smiles of Washington's young ladies, and he thought Sprague a small, insignificant youth. Old Gideon Welles of the Navy Department agreed that Sprague was callow and shallow, but the youth led his troops to Bull Run and won some distinction on that inglorious field. Thereafter, he wanted to be made a general, and Lincoln, who liked him, offered him a brigadier generalship. But Sprague refused. The dignity of Rhode Island, he explained, would not permit him to accept anything less than a major-general's commission. Moreover, under Rhode Island law, he could only accept the appointment for three months. Lincoln could, however, appoint him over and over again for three-month periods. The president, however, did not yield to this kind of States Rights pressure.

Lincoln and John A. Andrew

More serious by far were the problems which President Lincoln had with another governor, John A. Andrew of Massachusetts. In contrast to other New England governors--most of whom were able, conservative, co-operative, and undramatic--John Andrew was a dynamo of radicalism. He had been, before becoming governor, a champion of unpopular causes. In college he had founded a peace society, afterwards, he had joined the Church of the Disciples, served as secretary of a society for converting sailors, wrapped himself up in the temperance and abolition movements, and joined the Free-Soil party. By 1860 he was in the Republican party, but in it as an opponent of the staid and conservative elements. He went to Chicago to the Republican Convention, and gave support to a movement to keep Seward from getting the nomination. Back in Boston after the

Republican Convention, he told an audience that Lincoln's countenance bespoke the benignity and beauty of a noble soul. He would trust his case to the brain of Lincoln the lawyer and said, "I would trust my country's cause in his care while the wind blows and the water runs." So saying, Andrew launched his own campaign for governor of Massachusetts. In the election, he ran a thousand votes behind Lincoln. Massachusetts was one state in which the local candidate did not win votes for Lincoln. This, however, did not keep Andrew from demanding war, or from instructing Lincoln on every aspect of his administration.

Immediately upon his inauguration in January 1861, Andrew began to prepare for war upon the South. While Lincoln remained silent and moderate men everywhere hoped for compromise, Andrew and the Abolitionist radicals demanded blood. The day he was inaugurated a blizzard was sweeping New England, but Andrew had heard that Southerners were planning to capture Washington and he hurried off messengers in the snowstorm to alert the other New England governors. In the next few weeks, Andrew chartered ships, contracted for new uniforms for the militia, experimented with a new rifle, and asked old General Winfield Scott for instructions on the routes he should use in sending troops to Washington. "We must conquer the South, and to do this we must bring the Northern mind to a comprehension of this necessity," he announced. Accordingly, on January 8, anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, he ordered a salute fired to General Andrew Jackson. "The people," said Andrew, "must become used to the smell of powder!"

When war came, Andrew was delighted. He hurried troops to Washington and became a dynamo of energy. His troops had troubles getting across Baltimore, and for a time telegraph lines between Washington and the Northern cities were down. In the emergency, Andrew assumed the duties of running the country. He ordered the other governors to raise and send troops, gave instructions for the conduct of the war on all sides. Then, when the lines were restored through Baltimore, he found that the War Department had been less energetic, less frantic, than he. He began to get impatient with Abraham Lincoln.

Before long, he had come to distrust Lincoln completely. For one thing, Lincoln appointed Benjamin F. Butler, prominent Democratic politician, to command in New England, and soon Andrew and Butler

were quarreling over raising troops. When Andrew appealed to Lincoln, the president upheld Butler. Then, as a continuing complaint, Andrew found fault with Lincoln's reluctance to make the war into a crusade against slavery. He objected when Lincoln rescinded Fremont's order freeing slaves in Missouri, and when General David Hunter's attempt to recruit slaves into the armies met Lincoln's disapproval, Andrew came close to treason. He was, himself, having difficulties raising troops for the successive calls that came from the War Department, and he saw a relief for Massachusetts in Hunter's efforts to enroll South Carolina Negroes. When a new call came from the government, Andrew told Lincoln that if he would sustain Hunter, then and only then, would New England pour out her men. But Lincoln was not to be bluffed. He let Andrew know that the mayor of Boston, a Democrat, was willing to raise the troops, and he coerced Andrew into signing another call for troops. But Andrew began to contemplate another move. He enlisted other New England governors in a scheme to deliver no more troops to Lincoln. Instead, he proposed that they raise troops, put them under the command of General Fremont, and send Fremont forth on a sort of gigantic John Brown's raid to free slaves and enlist them in a victorious army. The other governors apparently agreed, and Andrew called for a conference of all the governors at Altoona, Pennsylvania. As the conference of the governors was assembling, Lincoln cut the ground from under Andrew's scheme by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation.

The proclamation did not give Andrew the Negro soldiers to take the place of his constituents, but it removed the argument which he could have used for his scheme to give soldiers to Fremont. Thereafter, however, Andrew had no use for Abraham Lincoln. In 1864 he hoped Fremont would get the Republican nomination, and to the end he opposed Lincoln's moderation, his slowness, and his humanitarianism.

Lincoln and Oliver P. Morton

Perhaps the nearest western counterpart to John A. Andrew was Indiana's Governor Oliver Perry Morton. Unlike Andrew, he had not been an erratic seeker for humanitarian causes since his youth. He had, instead, been a careful calculator of political chances. A native of Indiana, he had gone without notoriety or distinction to Miami University, had studied law, and had been admitted to the bar. He

entered politics as a Democrat, and won election as county judge. But though his beginnings in politics were promising, his prospects for advancement by the Democratic route were slow. In 1854, seeing the opportunities which a new party offered, he switched to the newly-forming Republican party. He did not, however, abandon the issues which were popular with Hoosiers. He had been a free-trade Democrat, and a hard-money Bentonite. He became a free-trade and hard-money Republican. But, on the other hand, he adopted an excessive anti-slavery zeal, and began to propound the principles of abolitionism from Republican rostrums. He had, in fact, so great a zest for the abolitionist cause that moderate Republicans feared to run him for office.

In 1860, however, he won the nomination for lieutenant-governor at the Republican Convention. The gubernatorial candidate was Henry S. Lane, renowned alike for his good humor and for the high flights of his oratory. Lane was a moderate on the slavery question, but everyone knew that, if the Republicans won the legislature, Lane would go to the United States Senate and Morton would become governor. In the campaign, the two candidates complemented each other. Morton espoused the most radical concepts, while Lane expounded the virtues of sweet reasonableness. It was, oratorically, a winning combination. In October, after having successfully extracted goodly sums from the New York moneybags who financed Indiana politics, they won. A couple of weeks later, flushed with success, they delivered Indiana to the Republicans and insured its electoral vote for Lincoln.

From the beginning of the war, Morton was enthusiastic. He urged Lincoln on to combat, and he made his state ready to answer any call. He demanded that the War Department send Indiana its full quota of arms and equipment. He organized his militia, and he announced that he could send five hundred men to defend the country just as soon as he got arms from the department. This was before Sumter. When his counsels resulted in the outbreak of the war, and he was sure that it was his advice that was being followed, he answered Lincoln's call for militia with a bombastic offer of ten thousand men for the defense of the Nation and to uphold the Authority of the Government.

But for all of his enthusiasm for war and his generous offer of aid, Morton had one weakness. Throughout the war he was constantly

nervous. Perhaps his nervousness was actual, or perhaps it was, as the Democrats claimed a simulated act for political purposes. In any case, Lincoln took note of it and discounted it. Morton, he said, was able, but he was the "skeeredest man" he had ever seen.

Really, or for political purposes, Morton was "skeered" of invasion from the neighboring state of Kentucky. He saw invaders lurking in every shadowy bush across the Ohio River, and he assumed the duty of alerting Lincoln to the constant danger. He instructed Lincoln, in fact, on Kentucky problems. Completely oblivious to the fact that Lincoln was a native of Kentucky and had excellent connections there, Morton gave him detailed accounts of Kentucky politics and Kentucky events. He instructed Lincoln on the defense of the Ohio River, advised him on the invasion of Kentucky. Once, in desperation at the administration's bungling in Kentucky, Morton even resorted to a totally uncharacteristic modesty. He told Lincoln,

While I am no military man and am among the humblest of those who are trying to serve the government...I believe I can promote the interest of Indiana and a strip of Kentucky...quite as well as General Mitchell if authorized by the government and provided the means.

He had his own spies in Kentucky, and as the army moved into Kentucky, Morton's political agents accompanied them to take over the government. Morton considered himself the loyal governor of Kentucky as well as of Indiana.

Really, or for political purposes, Morton was "skeered" of the Democrats in Southern Indiana, an area which a later Hoosier once described as "Lapland--where Kentucky laps over into Indiana." Only Richard Yates in neighboring Illinois was more convinced that there was a great plot of secret Knights of the Golden Circle to overthrow the government and take Indiana into the Southern Confederacy.

Yet Morton's nervousness never rendered him inept, or paralysed him. He had a high level of efficiency, a full measure of devotion, and great political courage. When a Democratic legislature investigated him, it could find no evidence of irregularity or corruption in his acts. It did, however, denounce his arbitrary acts, his interest in centralization, and his willingness to sacrifice the rights of Indiana to the demands of the federal government. In 1863 the legislature rejected Morton's message and adopted, instead, the message which

Democratic Governor Horatio Seymour had just sent to the New York legislature. Finally, the obstreperous legislature adjourned without making appropriations, leaving the state without funds to conduct the war. Then it was that Morton demonstrated his political courage. He refused to call the legislature into special session to wheedle appropriations from them. Instead, he proceeded to run the state without an appropriation. He got money from the War Department, he collected old taxes, he called for gifts from business men and from banks. He avoided calling the legislators back into session, but in the process he completed the work of making Indiana completely subservient to the national government. The troops in the field, engaged in their way in making a nation, endorsed the governor against the treasonable legislature.

Finally, Morton's support from the army, his willingness to sacrifice the liberties of the citizens, and his general nervousness came to a focus in the events of the campaign of 1864. The governor and his adjutant-general, H. C. Carrington, ferreted out Democratic leaders and under the excuse of suppressing the Sons of Liberty arrested thousands of Democrats. Then Carrington sent an agent-provocateur, one Stidger, into the county seats and Stidger enrolled hundreds of Democrats into Sons of Liberty clubs and then exposed them. Treason Trials in Indianapolis, carefully staged for the eve of the election, emphasized the treasonable connection between the traitors and the Democrats. Not content with this, Morton asked for and got troops sent home from Sherman's army. On election day the Nineteenth Vermont regiment voted in Indianapolis, but many a Hoosier Democrat found his vote challenged. Morton won re-election by 22,000 majority. In November, three weeks later, the soldiers and the Provost-marshal delivered an additional eight thousand majority for Lincoln. Indiana had made its contribution to the concentration of power, political and economic, in the hands of the national government.

With variations depending on local situations and the personalities of the governors, the story of Massachusetts and Indiana was repeated in each of the Northern states. Repeatedly the powers and prerogatives of the states and of their governors gave way before the growing power of the federal government. In each case Lincoln won a victory for the nation at the expense of the states.

In his dealings with the governors, President Lincoln had three distinct advantages. In the first place, he generally dealt with them

individually. Only rarely did the governors meet with one another to discuss their problems. Once, early in the war, the western governors assembled in Cleveland to give Lincoln instructions on the importance of the Mississippi River and to urge him to greater efforts. Lincoln took their advice, and kept them so busy raising troops that they had no time for consultation and for making blueprints for military campaigns. Once, in his war against Lincoln, John Andrew called a conference of New England governors at Providence, converted them to his idea of raising troops only for an abolitionist army under Fremont, and then led them to the conference at Altoona. But Lincoln cut the ground from under the abolitionist demands for Negro soldiers by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation.

In addition to dealing with the governors individually, Lincoln had the tremendous advantage that came from controlling the federal patronage. The president did not consult governors on making appointments in either the civil or the military service. Instead he built up a body of office holders who were personally dependent on him for their positions. Through the patronage, he built up a strong national party to take the place of the combination of state parties which had first elected him.

Then, too, Lincoln had the army at his command, and he was willing to use the army to insure Republican success at the polls. First in the border states, he sent the army to supervise elections. Then, in 1863, it was the army's activities which saved Ohio from falling into the hands of Clement L. Vallandigham. A few weeks later, at the moment when Lincoln was delivering his address at Gettysburg, federal troops in nearby Delaware were patrolling the polls to insure the victory of a Republican congressman. Finally, in 1864 it was the soldier vote, either cast in the field or sent home for the election, which insured Lincoln's majority in the electoral college. By 1864 it was no longer a case of the governor carrying their states, and having Lincoln elected on their coattails. In that year, Lincoln won the election, and the governors rode into office on the strength of the national ticket.

But, in the final analysis, the victory of Lincoln over the governors resulted from the president's superior grasp of the nation's problems, and his better emotional and intellectual balance. When the governors became neurotic, hysterical, and "skeered", or when they became arrogant, contentious and imperative, Lincoln remained

calm, keeping his balance, and keeping his eye on the goal of saving the Union. In a blundering generation Lincoln was a man of exceptional clearheadedness. And this, above all, made Abraham Lincoln the Architect of the Nation.

The victory of nationalism over localism, of centralization over States Rights, is, in the last analysis, a victory of a keener intellect over men of lesser minds. The New Nation that emerged from the Civil War was not solely the result of the military victory of the federal forces over the armies of Robert E. Lee. It was, at least equally, the result of the political victory which Abraham Lincoln's mind and personality won over the governors of the Northern States. And not only did he build the nation--he dedicated it as well. He dedicated it, under God, to a new freedom, and with a duty to achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

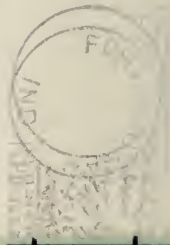
NOTE

This account is based upon William B. Hesseltine's, *LINCOLN AND THE WAR GOVERNORS* (New York, Knopf, 1948, Marboro, 1955). A version of it appeared as "Lincoln's War Governors" in the *ABRAHAM LINCOLN QUARTERLY*, 4:153-200. A phase of the subject is treated in *LINCOLN'S PROBLEMS IN WISCONSIN* (Madison, Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, 1952). See also William B. Hesseltine and Hazel C. Wolf, "Lincoln, the Governors and States Rights", *SOCIAL STUDIES*, 30: 350-355, and "The Altoona Conference and the Emancipation Proclamation," *PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY*, July, 1947.

This "humble" letter of Morton's is in the collection of the Lincoln National Life Foundation of Fort Wayne. For calling it to my attention, I am indebted to Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry.

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